Backward States Grant Fund

401. SHRI NANDI YELLAIAH: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the details of present status of Backward States Grant Fund as proposed in the previous budget;

(b) the details of funds released, so far out of this Backward States Grants Fund, State-wise; and

(c) the details of schemes implemented sofar towards the development of Backward States through these funds; State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Backward States Grant Funds, as announced by the Union Finance Minister in his Budget Speech 2004-05, is to become operational from the financial year 2005-06.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Backward districts in Orissa

402. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have identified 137 backward districts for development in the country and it is proposed to spend Rs. 45 crores on each of them;

(b) if so, the criteria for identification; and

(c) the details of the districts that have been identified in Orissa and the time-frame within which these would be taken up for development?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI M.V. RAJASEKHARAN): (a) The Government have identified 147 districts, 115 backward districts and 32 districts affected by left wing extremism, for funding under the Backward Districts Initiative of the Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana. A sum of Rs. 45 crore is to be provided for each district over a period of three years on 100 per cent grant basis linked with the satisfactory progress of schemes included in the District Plans.

(b) The backward districts have been identified on the basis of an index of backwardness for the Non-Special Category States and Assam. For the remaining Special Category States, the identification has been made on the recommendation of the State Government. The extremist affected districts covered under the scheme have been identified keeping in view the intensity of left wing extremist violence over a period of five years.

(c) Five districts of Orissa, namely, two backward districts o Keonjhar and Sundargarh and three extremist affected districts of Ganjam, Gajapati and Mayurbhanj have been coverd under the sheme. The District Plans of Ganjam and Mayurbhanj districts have been approved and the funds have already started flowing to these districts. The District Plans of Gajapati, Keonjhar and Sundargarh districts are to be considered for approval in the next meeting of the Empowered Committee on Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana.

Floating Seismic Monitoring Vessel

403. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Will the MINISTER OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government suggested Australia, USA, Japan and the UN for setting up of a floating seismic monitoring vessel;

(b) if so, the reaction from the above countries and the UN; and

(c) whether it is also a fact that Australia and USA have expressed some reservation on this suggestions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF OCEAN DEVELOPMENT (SHRI KAPIL SIBAL): (a) No, Sir. No floating seismic monitoring vessels is proposed to be set up.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Early warning for Tsunami waves

†404. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the MINISTER OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Meteorological Department of India was aware of Tsunami in advance in Indian ocean on 25-26 December, 2004;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.